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ABSTRACT

This year-long research project documented critical issues of supply and demand for teachers in the Carolinas. Researchers focused on the number of public and private school education positions advertised in the four major newspapers serving South Carolina and the Charlotte metropolitan region of North Carolina. They documented advertising trends for public and private schools in the region by recording the number of education-related positions advertised in the Sunday edition of each of four major newspapers during 1998. Data analysis indicated that the number of advertisements related to education was substantial. The newspapers included a total of 7,430 positions related to education during 1998. The ads were placed by a variety of schools and educational entities. There were advertised positions in 13 different states and 1 international location. Math, science, and special education were clear areas of need. Industrial arts, elementary education, English, and school principal positions were also frequently advertised. Many education vacancies appeared in July and continued into the first 2 months of the school year. These data support the notion that many districts are experiencing teacher shortages throughout the year. (Contains 13 references.) (SM)

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Newspaper Advertising Trends and Teacher Supply in the Carolinas

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Newspaper Advertising Trends and Teacher Supply in the Carolinas

The purpose of this yearlong descriptive research project was to document critical issues of supply and demand for educators in the Carolinas. To do so, the project focused on the number of public and private school education positions advertised in the four major newspapers serving South Carolina and the Charlotte metrolina region of North Carolina. Advertising trends for public and private schools in the region were documented by recording the number of teaching positions advertised in the Sunday edition of each of four major newspapers during 1998. This project adds further evidence to the fact that schools are facing an increasingly difficult task in recruiting and retaining qualified personnel.

Background

Across the United States school districts are struggling to find qualified teachers for their classrooms. In South Carolina, the shortage of teachers is exacerbated by legislation that reduced class size in the primary grades. With renewed support for the importance of having adequate numbers of qualified teachers, finding persons to staff classrooms has many districts resorting to measures that reduce quality. For example, the National Center for Education Statistics (1994) reports that across the United States, 31% of mathematics teachers and 22% of science teachers do not hold at least a minor in their respective disciplines. Even in such areas as social studies and English, where surpluses were thought to exist, 14% and 13% of teachers do not have sufficient content expertise expected of fully licensed teachers. According to Recruiting New Teachers (1998), 2.2 million teachers will be needed in the next ten years, a number that is equivalent to replacing every medical doctor in the United States more than two and one half times over.

While many sources are reporting teacher shortages, data must be viewed carefully. Projections of needed teachers are unclear in some areas because of the lack of comprehensive data collection, retirement trends, and persons receiving degrees in education who may never enter the

profession. For example, in South Carolina of the 2,432 students completing teacher education programs in 1997-98, only 1,228 became employed in P-12 schools in the state (Poda, 1999).

By reviewing the literature on supply and demand over the past ten years, one sees how the need for teachers in many areas has changed. For example, Seiner (1992) found that from 1989-1991 the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania had a substantial surplus of available teachers rather than the shortage some had envisioned. A later study by Scheetz (1995) studied 294 school districts across the US. The survey revealed that new teaching positions would increase by only 3% in the 1995-96 school year. The study revealed a surplus of elementary teachers, but a shortage of secondary teachers. Ponessa's (1996) research found a great shortage of teachers in the west and a strong need for math, science and special education teachers. Barkum (1997) found that the demand for teachers would increase dramatically over the next few years. Hardy (1998) reported that many suburban school districts have a surplus of applicants while rural, city, and/or low-paying districts have shortages. Some states like Nevada and Colorado face shortages while Maine and Connecticut have an oversupply of teachers. Hardy also reports that there continues to be a shortage of math, science, and special education teachers. Furthermore, Pipho (1998) stated that government projections for the year 2006 indicate a 21% growth in demand for teachers with the special education growth in demand expected to be 59%.

Missing from many data sources are supply and demand figures for school administrators, counselors, and others who are vital to the success of schools. Because most persons in these positions come from the ranks of classroom teachers, the needs school districts will face in the coming years becomes even more dramatic.

With the critical need for new teachers, school districts use a variety of methods to recruit qualified persons to their districts. One vehicle is through newspaper advertising. By studying the

weekly advertisements in large newspapers, data can be found that may benefit employers and potential teacher candidates as well.

Methodology

Information for this study was gathered from the Sunday edition of four newspapers: *The Charlotte Observer*, *The State* (Columbia, SC), *Greenville News* (Greenville, SC), and *Post and Courier* (Charleston, SC). Education-related positions in the classified section of each paper were documented on a weekly basis. Information collected for each job listing included the date, school district, facility type, position, grade, need, and primary responsibility. Ads repeated from previous Sundays were not included. Types of facilities were categorized as public schools, charter schools, correctional/treatment facilities, private religious schools, private non-religious schools, tutoring centers, private tutoring, and others. All positions were classified using the South Carolina certification areas. Additional codes were added as various types of positions were encountered. For example, many positions were advertised for childcare providers and community colleges. All of the data were coded and then entered into an SPSS file for analysis.

Circulation information was obtained by contacting the advertising or marketing department of each newspaper. *The Charlotte Observer,* with a Sunday circulation of about 300,200, has the largest home- delivered circulation of all the newspapers reviewed in this study. *The Observer* is delivered to 12 counties in North Carolina and three in South Carolina. During the summer months, *The Observer* is available in many of the beach communities in South Carolina. *The Charleston Post and Courier*, with a Sunday circulation of 244,000, has the second highest circulation rate of the newspapers reviewed. *The Post and Courier* is delivered to eight counties in South Carolina. *The State* is delivered to 42 of the 46 counties in South Carolina and has a Sunday circulation of 160,000 copies. *The State* is also available for purchase in Charlotte, North Carolina, and Augusta County,

Georgia. *The Greenville News* has a Sunday circulation of 145,000 and is delivered to six counties in South Carolina.

Results

The number of advertisements related to education was substantial; it was not hypothesized that there would be such a large number and variety of positions. For example, in 1998 there were 7,430 positions related to education advertised in the four newspapers reviewed. The ads were placed by a wide variety of schools and educational entities. For example, 86 public school districts in South Carolina, 60 public school districts in North Carolina, 51 private schools in South Carolina, and 26 private schools in North Carolina placed the majority of ads. Furthermore, there were advertised positions in 13 different states ranging from New York to Florida and west to California. (See Table 8 for further details on diversity of locale.) There was also one international position listed.

Table 1 outlines the facility type for each of the 7,430 positions and illustrates that public schools are in competition with many education-related facilities. For example, private and religious schools comprised 42 percent of the positions advertised.

Table 1
Frequency and Percentage of Positions by Facility

Facility	Frequency	Percent
Public School	3967	53
Correctional/Treatment	141	2
Private (religious)	647	9
Private (other)	2441	33
Other	234	3

N= 7430

Table 2 outlines the public school positions that were most often advertised. Data substantiate that math, science, and special education were clear areas of need, a trend that exists nationally. In addition, industrial arts, elementary education, English, and school principal positions were well advertised, areas not often perceived by the public as areas of great need.

Table 2

Frequency and Percentage of the Most Often Advertised Public School Positions

Position	Frequency	Percent
Art	61	1.6
Biology	43	1.1
Business Education	109	2.7
Chemistry	37	.9
Coach	65	1.6
Computer Technology	100	2.5
Early Childhood Education	65	1.6
Elementary Education	160	4.0
English	165	4.0
French	32	.8
Industrial Arts	201	5.1
Guidance Counselor	72	1.9
Home Economics	36	.9
Industrial Technology	45	1.1
Library/Media Specialist	82	2.1
Math	283	7.1
Music	158	3.1
Physical Education/Health	80	2.1
Principal	178	4.6
Principal, Assistant	110	2.8
Science (General)	149	3.8
School Psychologist	47	1.2
Social Studies	124	3.1
Spanish	113	2.8
Special Education	323	8.2
Speech Pathology	54	1.4
Technology Specialist	41	1.0

N= 3967

These data suggest that almost any type of public or private school position will be advertised at some point during the year. Examples of other advertised education-related positions not listed in Table 2 include teacher aides, directors of public relations, and directors of research.

The most prevalent months to advertise public school positions were May, June, and July with July having an average of 151 positions advertised per Sunday; however, Table 3 clearly indicates

that public school districts use newspaper advertising throughout the year. For example, during October, February, November, and January approximately 40 positions were advertised each Sunday.

Table 3
Average Number of Positions Advertised per Month for Public Schools

Month	Average
January	43
February	41
March	82
April	66
May	117
June	140
July	151
August	70
September	70
October	40
November	42
December	53

N= 3967

These data support the notion that many districts are experiencing teacher shortages throughout the year. For example, reports from 78 of South Carolina's public school districts indicate there were 521 unfilled teaching positions at the beginning of the 1999-2000 school year with 517 vacancies remaining as of November 15, 1999 (Poda, 1999).

Table 4 summarizes the frequency and percentage of advertised public school positions by newspaper. *The State* is clearly the largest advertiser of public school positions in South Carolina and the Charlotte metro region. In general, the types of public school districts that advertised the most positions were large districts near the cities of Charlotte, Columbia, and Florence. This may be a result of the circulation rate of the paper, the number of educational personnel needed in that district, and/or the cost of advertising.

Table 4
Frequency and Percentage of Advertised
Public School Positions by Newspaper

Newspaper	Frequency	Percentage
Charlotte Observer	1046	26.4
The State (Columbia, SC)	2216	55.9
Greenville News	343	8.6
Post and Courier (Charleston, SC)	362	9.1

N= 3967

Tables 5 –7 elaborate on the advertising trend of private schools. Table 5 outlines the private school positions that were most often advertised. Unlike the public school positions listed in Table 2, Table 5 indicates a significant demand for preschool teachers, day care workers, and teacher aides at private facilities. Positions in math, elementary education, and early childhood education were often advertised as well.

Table 5
Frequency and Percentage of the Most Often
Advertised Private School Positions

Position	Frequency	Percent
Art	18	.6
Computer Technology	50	1.6
Early Childhood Education	80	2.6
Elementary Education	70	2.3
English	39	1.3
French	22	.7
Industrial Arts	25	.8
Math	70	2.3
Physical Education/Health	30	1.0
Science (General)	40	1.3
Social Studies	24	.8
Spanish	41	1.3
Special Education	48	1.6
Day care	723	23.4
Preschool	255	8.3
Aide	267	8.6

N= 3088

A breakdown of the average number of advertised positions per month is found in Table 6. May, June, July and August were months with the highest number of private school positions advertised which is similar to advertising patterns for public schools

Table 6
Average Number of Positions
Advertised per Month for Private Schools

Month	Average
January	52
February	69
March	62
April	61
May	71
June	67
July	85
August	91
September	41
October	46
November	36
December	26

N= 3088

Table 7 summarizes the frequency and percentage of advertised private school positions. For example, *The Charlotte Observer* (35.7%) is the most likely place to find education-related positions for private schools.

Table 7
Frequency and Percentage of Advertised Private School Positions by Newspaper

Newspaper	Frequency	Percentage
Charlotte Observer	1103	35.7
The State (Columbia, SC)	906	29.3
Greenville News	520	16.8
Post and Courier (Charleston, SC)	559	18.1

Table 8 lists those out-of-state positions advertised.

Table 8
Diversity of Locales Advertising Educational Positions

Locale	Frequency
Asia	1
California	1
Florida	1
Georgia	19
Indiana	1
Kentucky	1
Mississippi	1
New York	2
Nevada	1
Tennessee	8
Texas	3
Virginia	12

N=51

This project also sought to identify urgency of need; therefore, each advertised position was coded for this variable. Table 9 indicates that only about 3% of the positions had a statement related to immediate need.

Table 9
Frequency and Percentage of Immediate Need

Need	Frequency	Percentage
Need immediately	198	2.7
No Immediate need	7232	97.3

N= 7430

Table 10 indicates the employment status of all advertised positions. Full-time education-related positions were the most frequently listed positions covering nearly 83% of all positions.

Table 10
Frequency and Percentage of Position Duration

Type	Frequency	Percentage
Full time	6150	82.8
Part time	1097	14.8
Substitute	52	.7
Temporary	97	1.3
Other	34	.5

N=7430

Discussion

This descriptive research project serves to validate the previous research and reports by Ponessa (1996), Barkum (1997), Hardy (1998) and Pipho (1998) all of whom predicted the current teacher shortage. For example, Hardy (1998) reported that many rural and/or low paying schools have and will continue to experience difficulty finding faculty and staff. South Carolina is a rural state with a significant need for quality teachers in such areas. Clearly private and public schools in the Carolinas are experiencing difficulty finding qualified individuals for teaching and administrative positions and it appears this trend will continue with the majority of school districts in the region advertising a variety of available positions.

This report gives both public and private school personnel, state policy makers, and teacher education faculty and staff more data concerning teacher demand particularly as it relates to the growing needs of school districts for teachers as they begin the school year. Knowing one of the ways that education entities recruit staff is important for all involved.

This review of newspaper advertising demonstrates that many education vacancies appear in July and continue into the first two months of the school year. The number of position vacancies and the dates they are advertised has implications for preservice teachers. First, graduating teachers and those seeking to re-enter the profession need to be more knowledgeable about the hiring cycles of school districts. While most understand that continuing teachers sign contracts in the late spring and

vacancies are posted at that time, many may not understand that large numbers of vacancies remain throughout the summer and continue across the year. These individuals may become discouraged, seeking employment in other fields besides education by mid-summer.

As the search for new teachers becomes a "seller's" market new teachers will be faced with the possibility of several job offers. Districts will need to be much more aggressive in their recruitment strategies and need to be clear about their hiring cycles and continuing opportunities for employment throughout the year. Such information needs to be shared with teacher education faculty and career placement offices.

In addition, the data indicate that there are openings for many positions, particularly in rural areas. In some cases, a teacher will need to be prepared to move to another region of the state or country to obtain his/her first teaching position. Getting prospective teachers to move to these areas remains a challenge for many schools and we predict that it will continue to be a problem in the future and is thus in need of future research.

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